GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:550
ANSWERED ON:04.05.2005
INCIDENCE OF CANCER
Manoj Dr. K.S.

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has conducted any study regarding the reasons behind high incidence of cancer in any particular region in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is aware that the incidence of cancer in Thanneermukkam village in Alappuzha district in Kerala is alarmingly high as reported in April, 10, 2005 issue of `The Week` magazine;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the concrete measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to combat the disease?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS)

(a)to(e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 550 FOR 4TH MAY, 2005

According to the Cancer Atlas brought out by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) based on data collected under the National Cancer Registry Programme (NCRP), the incidence of different cancers is not uniform throughout the country. As reported in the `Cancer incidence of 5 countries` published by WHO, cancer incidence in India as a whole is much lower in comparison to the incidence across the world. As per the Cancer Atlas of ICMR , the highest incidence rates have been reported for the cancer of gall bladder among the women in Delhi and the cancer of tongue and mouth among the men in Bhopal. According to the Atlas, Thyroid cancer has been detected in the costal areas of Kerala, Karnataka and Goa. Breast cancer among women is one of the leading cancers in urban areas.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has conducted special studies in the north east for understanding the role of environmental smoke and cancers of the nasopharynx. The use of soot dried meat was shown to be carcinogenic. More recently, the Council has initiated major studies on understanding the association between use of tobacco and cancers. It has also initiated studies on use of pesticides and cancers. The Council is likely to undertake studies on cancers and diet. In addition, the Council has undertaken studies to understand the role of H.Pylori in gastric pathology through undertaking genetic studies. The Council has also mapped the HPV prevalence in various centers in the Country in order to study further the etiology of cervical cancer and make available vaccines for its prevention.

From the data available under Cancer Atlas report, Alappuzha district (where Thanneermukam village is located) like other districts of Kerala has a high proportion of cancer of the Thyroid (Relative Proportion: 9.3% in females and 3.7% in males). The same district also has a high relative proportion of tumors of the Lymphoid and Haemopoetic system particularly Myeloid Leukemia in both males and females and Lymphoid Leukemia and Non Hodgkin`s Lymphoma in males. According to the Regional Cancer Centre, Trivandrum, the Department of Community Medicine of Medical College, Alleppy, has examined the media reports regarding a high incidence of cancer in Thanneermukkam village in Alappurzha district in Kerala and found no obvious evidence to substantiate the claim. A systematic population based study will be required to ascertain the risk factors.

Health being a State Subject, it is for various State Governments to ensure that adequate facilities for early detection, diagnosis and treatment of cancer are made available. Under the schemes of National Cancer Control Programme, special emphasis is now being laid on early detection of Cancer through screening, promoting health education, creating awareness etc. under District Cancer Control Programme. Further the Central Government is also supplementing the efforts of the State Governments by providing financial assistance for setting up of Radiotherapy Units in Government Medical Colleges/Hospitals for providing treatment facilities.